

COMMISSION IN HANDLING PROBLEMS OF LABOR AND IMMIGRATION IN PALESTINE.

The Remedy Lies in the Gradual
Adoption of a Modified Form
of Self-Government.

By Louis Fischer

(Our Palestine Correspondent)

There will be no Constitutional Assembly in Palestine. Instead the Provisional Committee has decided to call a meeting of elected representatives of the Jews of Palestine which is to arrange the self-government and democratic representation of the Jewish Settlement.

All this has a history. It will be remembered that on several occasions the Provisional Committee determined on the convening of a Constitutional Assembly, that on each occasion reason was found or created for postponement, that the final postponement effected by the united opposition of the orthodox and the colonists, was tantamount to a death blow. Now, in place of an assembly which was to have written the constitution of a commonwealth, we have an assembly which will attempt to begin self administration in the country.

It would be possible and profitable to enter into a discussion of the former opposition to the Constitutional Assembly, and of the present opposition to the new assembly—an opposition which will likely again postpone and probably again strangle. But this would be politics and not basic. Whether the assembly materializes or no, it is far more important, now, to consider, first, why the healthy elements in the settlement demand such an assembly, and second, why the settlement needs self government. Some would make the second "why" a "because" and say "They demand an assembly because the settlement needs self government." This is perfectly correct and the positive cause of the assembly should be accredited to those parts of Palestine Jewry that maintain it. But it will be additionally correct to ascribe a negative reason.

The blow given the assembly by the union of Halukka and the landowner might not only have destroyed the thing itself but would surely have weakened the idea and its possibility for a considerable period were it not for the negative cause. The negative cause of the desire for self government is the dissatisfaction with the administration of others. Since the liberation of Judea, local Jewish affairs, have been in hands of the Zionist Commission acting with power and instructions from the London Central Zionist office. The Commission has nigh two years of history behind it, yet in all that time it has not found favor with any single element or class or faction of the population except the parasite inhabitants of our holy cities upon whom the supposedly modern creative government has poured a flood of gold far greater in volume than that of a pre-war Halukka. Otherwise, the radicals and the semi-radicals, as well as the middle-class conservatives, are opposed to the rule of the Zionist Commission.

Things have come to such a pass that the recall of the major personnel of the Commission has been suggested on many occasions by many people of the several parties, and it seems that it is only the hoped-for arrival of Dr. Weitzman which staves off a hostile general demonstration demanding the eviction of his temporary representatives and co-workers. Matters came fast to a head on account of the Commission's attitude and actions on immigration and labor. The Commission has done nothing to help poor people immigrate to Palestine; it did nothing to help those who came to the doors of the country. On good authority it is even stated that the Commission has used its influence to close those doors.

Unbelievable as this seems, the fact is that numerous immigrants, after months of wearisome, dangerous travel, found the gates of Jaffa, and railroads running south from Syria, closed to them. Today a physician and three students await forcible return to Siberia. Thousands suffer in Constantinople because they cannot obtain

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